

The English Leaflet

THE ENGLISH LEAFLET is published at Boston, by the New England Association of Teachers of English. Subscription price, One Dollar.
Sec'y-Treas., A. B. DeMille, Winthrop, Mass.
Editor, Charles Swain Thomas, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

Vol. XXIV

FEBRUARY, 1925

Number 210

FEB 10 1925

LANGUAGE AND THINKING

THE EDITOR

In our discussions of effective methods of teaching English our emphasis has generally fallen upon the importance of developing power in the interpretation of literature and skill in oral and written expression. Without any intention of relinquishing the importance of this doctrine, we have nevertheless in more recent years come to feel that we could secure a firmer foundation to our theory if we could push our inquiry further back and study more carefully the thinking processes which rationalize both interpretation and expression. The immediate interest of teachers now centers, accordingly, upon this previously neglected field—the field of thinking and its relation to language. The scope of this relation I can here only briefly sketch.

I

In the first place it may be frankly admitted that scholars are not agreed upon the exact nature of this relationship. Some assert that we can think without the agency of language. Surely, infants in their period of childish wonderment, and primitive races in their uncivilized state, and indeed the highly educated in their passive and listless moods, do a kind of rudimentary thinking without calling into play the instrumentality of language, even when language is interpreted to include gesture and facial movement and inarticulate sound.

Into the niceties of this beguiling problem we need not now enter. As teachers of English in school and college

Copyright, 1925 By Charles Swain Thomas

we do not deal with mere infants or with members of the primitive races. We do, however, deal constantly with the careless, the sluggish, the indifferent. Our endeavor in this case is to convert mental languor into alertness and curiosity.

One general and constant problem, however, is with the normal pupil who comes to us with a certain degree of language skill to be trained to the more effective standards which civilization is everywhere erecting. Upon what elements of our subject can we most wisely direct our teaching efforts?

1. Vocabulary

In the first place, we may question the present vocabulary attainment of our students. By means of the English vocabulary tests we can diagnose with a fair degree of accuracy the relative achievement of each pupil's knowledge of words. While we shall not make the immediate inference that those who know the largest number of words have the greatest power of thought, we can study each case—particularly those with the notably high and the notably low scores—with the idea of determining correlation between word equipment and thinking skill. Moreover, we can formulate many varied devices which will stimulate pupils to increase their individual vocabularies—not, of course, for the sake of the increase, but for functioning skill in thinking and in phrasing.

2. Sentence Structure

We can, in the second place, make a careful study of the relationship of our sentence forms to our thinking processes. A teacher can discover many methods of improving his teaching technique in this line by watching very carefully how his own oral and written sentences are formed. Does he automatically express subordinate ideas in subordinate forms? Does he logically connect what he is now expressing with the idea he has just previously expressed? And does he, with sufficient care, anticipate the clause or the phrase which is immediately to follow?

We can further increase our stock of teaching suggestions by studying the sentence style of noted writers. Henry James, for example, offers us an extreme case of the habitual

use of the involved form. But this, we discover, is perfectly natural; it is highly individualistic; it is a pure reflex of his method of thought. He starts to make an assertion, broad and comprehensive in its sweep. Seeing that he includes too much, he safeguards his utterance by a limiting parenthesis. Even in the midst of his interposed parenthesis, which he finds too inclusive, he interjects a limiting sub-parenthesis which will make what he precisely says exactly coincide with what he precisely thinks. His sentence structure is involved only because his thinking is involved. Each is essentially lucid. To the reader the style may seem intricate, but it is only because the thinking is intricate.

Another person's style—one of our own students, perhaps—may be obscure because the thinking is obscure. The writer lacks directness in expression because he does not clearly perceive the thought which, in a blindly groping way, he is trying to express. It is as if he were trying to thread his course through a maze. He is indecisive; he repeatedly runs into a cul-de-sac. He retraces his steps only to make a second blunder as costly as the first. A graph of his course within a single-sentence area would reveal a series of abortive attempts, fatuously directed and hopelessly ineffectual. It would look intricate, but it would not be of that cast of intricacy which reflects a highly involved and intelligently controlled adventure.

3. *The Preconceived Theme*

The third field of study in this realm of language and thinking would involve the ways in which whole topics or themes are carefully thought through. It involves a succession of thought processes with the relation and interrelation of units logically composed. It comprehends what we call the architectonics of the piece, whether it be written or oral.

Teachers intent on developing in their pupils power in constructive thinking will adopt or invent certain devices—such, for example, as the *enumeration method*. Pupils can be definitely taught to think through a topic, analyze it, and then synthetically build it up by the use of a definite

number of thought units—just as the ideas in this portion of the present discussions are arranged in sequence under three related units: 1 Vocabulary; 2. Sentence Structure; 3. The Preconceived Theme. Such an arrangement is purely mechanical, but the mechanical process provides a sluiceway into which thought particles are effectively directed. Other methods designed to encourage the organization of thought, skillful teachers of English are daily employing. With a constantly perfected technique, these teachers will become more and more helpful in their guidance of the thought processes of their students.

II

Having in the preceding paragraphs very briefly sketched certain essentials in the relationship of thought to language, I should like to consider a fault too common in our schools—the habit of a pupil's not thinking in a challenging, active way about matters he reads, either in his textbooks or in his voluntary reading. A student's mind may be rebellious and belligerent in many ways, but in accepting printed statements it has become unwholesomely passive and docile. In studying methods whereby this languid mentality may be aseptically pricked, we have, in our English Seminar in the Graduate School of Education at Harvard, devised a test, which is now only in its tentative stage. The Seminar will gladly welcome the criticisms which members of our Association, or any one else, will send to us. The test which follows is self-explanatory. Forms for the various junior and senior high school grades are later to be worked out, and in this we shall welcome the volunteer services of co-operating groups.

We shall particularly welcome at this stage of our work sentences that reveal errors that are evidently due to inaccurate and loose methods of thinking rather than to mere inaccuracies in the facts of knowledge. We have appended to the trial test, Form A, a group of sentences that we hope later to arrange into Form B. But no sentences will be finally selected until their appropriateness has been carefully tested in the schools.

LANGUAGE AND THINKING TEST—FORM A

CHARLES SWAIN THOMAS

And Members of the English Seminar in the Graduate School of
Education, Harvard University

School Pupil
 City or Town..... Sex....Age....Years....Months
 State Grade Section.....
 Date of Test..... Course (Curriculum).....

The sentences in the following list are of two types, A and B.

TYPE A—The Type A sentences are perfectly correct and should be checked with the letter C in the first column at the right.

EXAMPLE—Trees that shed their leaves in the autumn are called deciduous trees. As oaks and elms shed their leaves in autumn we can say that they are deciduous trees.

NOTE: As these are perfectly sensible statements, correct in thought and expression, we shall simply check with the letter C in column A.

TYPE B—The Type B sentences contain blunders due to false thinking or inaccurate phrasing. The sentences that are not sensible (the absurd, illogical, or inconsistent statements) are to be corrected by such changes of words or phrases as will make the thought and expression sensible and accurate.

EXAMPLE—Yesterday morning when I started out very early I took a walk on the road which went due north; turning on the first path that led to the left, I faced the rising sun.

NOTE: This of course is inconsistent; you could not, by turning to the left, face the rising sun. You can make the sentence logical, correct, consistent, by drawing a line through the word "left," and substituting the word "right."

- a. Allow thirty minutes for the test—five for the explanation; twenty-five for the sentences.
- b. After studying the explanation, read carefully the first sentence in the list of "Correct and Incorrect Sentences".
- c. If the statement seems to you perfectly sensible (logical, consistent, harmonious in thought and language), simply put the letter C in the first column at the right, and make no changes in the phrasing or punctuation.
- d. If the sentence is foolish, absurd, illogical, or inconsistent, alter the words or phrases so as to make the thought and language correct. The changes can all be very simply made by substitutions, omissions, additions, or transposings.
- e. Go through each of the sentences in turn in the same manner, taking them up in the order they occur.
- f. Reserve the second column for scoring, crediting each correct sentence *one point*. Those correctly checked with the letter C are to be rated at the same value (*one point*) as those which are correctly changed. The percentile score will of course be twice the total number of correct sentences.
- g. As some of the sentences contain more than one error they cannot be credited as correct unless all the faults are corrected.
- h. Each revised sentence must be correct from the standpoint of English; it is not sufficient merely to remove the inconsistency.

CORRECT AND INCORRECT SENTENCES

A B

1. Longitude is the distance east or west of a given meridian.
2. Animals and plants are animate; minerals are inanimate.
3. Wolf had thrice saved his little master from death; once from fire, twice from flood, and once from gypsies.
4. There are two kinds of clauses, to which grammarians apply the technical terms, *subordinate* and *insubordinate*.
5. Their plan was to start Saturday at sunset, spend that day at Hillcrest, and return to the city that same evening.
6. One of the interesting things about the study of history is the discovery of the ways in which individual men, like Washington, Lincoln, and Roosevelt, have influenced events.
7. An ambitious boy should choose healthful work, and work that offers little chance for promotion.
8. Potential energy is inactive; kinetic energy active. We can therefore say, that it is the potential energy of the Niagara Falls that makes the Great Rapids and keeps the big dynamos whirling.
9. We shall never bring disgrace to our city by any act of dishonesty or cowardice; and shall ever desert our suffering comrades in the ranks.
10. The book makes throughout an attempt to impress upon us the need of social service, and thus points out to us a way in which we may live constantly to ourselves.
11. The terrific explosion that occurred is said to have been due to the extreme carefulness of the watchman.
12. I saw him give the quick glance of the untrained artist, taking in every detail of the picture and passing immediate judgment upon it.
13. The water was so rough that lowering the life boats was a very simple problem.
14. You must hurry, for if you do not you will certainly not miss the train.

15. As you want to learn all you can about the plays of Sheridan, you must n't fail to miss the splendid production of *The Rivals*.
16. Care in the arrangement of our ideas will enable us to impart our thoughts more clearly.
17. Careful reading of our arithmetic problems will enable us to solve them more readily.
18. Interest in athletics is largely responsible for the demand for stadiums in our college towns and in the big cities.
19. The pines, maples, and hemlocks made a patch of green against the January snow.
20. Elms, willows, and poplars lose their leaves in the autumn.
21. Among the valuable plant-products are linen, wool, and cotton.
22. Water freezes at 32° F. and boils at 212° F.
23. Outdoor evaporation, which is increased by heat, is more rapid in winter.
24. Zebedee is the rather strange name of a man in the New Testament, but no one knows who was the father of Zebedee's children.
25. A square has four right angles; a square is a rectangle, but not all rectangles are squares.
26. As the literary men of whom I am speaking were all doing their best work between 1620 and 1640, we can say that they belong to the sixteenth century.
27. If a frog that is at the bottom of a well ten feet deep climbs up two feet each day and slips back one foot each night, he will reach the top on the tenth day.
28. As my books are set up vertically in regular order on the book shelves that I face, the titles at the top directly in front of me, pages 1 to 10 are on the right hand side of each volume.
29. As a compound subject regularly takes a plural verb, I should say, *There goes John and Henry*.
30. A butcher should stick to his last.

31. The verb *burst* is an irregular verb; I should therefore use the form *busted* in the past tense.
32. The cannibals in Zanzibar are all vegetarians.
33. In countries where the laws permit woman suffrage, there are no women of illegal age who are not allowed to vote.
34. As the open season for deer commences on November first and closes in December, we shall not be allowed to go deer-hunting on Thanksgiving Day.
35. As I systematically construct a numerical series by starting with 1 and adding the same number each time, my figures should run: 1; 4; 7; 10; 12; 16; 19; 22; 25; 28; 30; 33.
36. They missed my absence at the meeting which illness prevented my attending.
37. The butcher this morning weighed for me two pieces of meat. The first piece weighed two pounds; the second twenty-five ounces. I chose the former because it weighed less.
38. All of us are greatly indebted to those descendants of ours who founded this government of the United States.
39. According to the Bible, Adam, the first man, had two sons, Cain and Abel. Cain in anger slew his brother, and thus Abel became the first murderer.
40. As 8-point type is smaller than 10-point type, I shall have this advertisement set in 10-point type, so that I can get more words into the same amount of space.
41. Portland, Oregon, is a little above the 45° parallel, and Portland, Maine, is just a little above the 42° parallel. Portland, Maine, accordingly is further north than Portland, Oregon.
42. As I bought this coat in Europe for \$250, and paid only \$50 duty, I decided to sell it for \$350, as I could thus make a profit of \$100.
43. As we now have daylight-saving time, which is an hour faster than standard time, the train which regularly, leaves the station at 8 o'clock, standard time, now leaves at 7, daylight-saving time.

A B

44. Since daylight-saving time ceases tomorrow, at ten o'clock, we shall move our clocks an hour forward.
45. One train starting from Boston to New York—a distance of 200 miles—traveled at the rate of 35 miles an hour; another train, starting at the same time from New York to Boston traveled at the rate of 40 miles an hour. They met at midnight, when they were ten miles apart.
46. I owed two notes for \$300 each at the bank. The first one dated January 1, 1923, bore interest at 5%; the second dated January 1, 1924, bore interest of 6%. As the interest rate on the former was higher, I paid it off first.
47. As I bought ten shares of stock at 90 and sold them later for 85, I made fifty dollars.
48. San Francisco and Los Angeles are the two largest cities of the state. The population of San Francisco, the capital, is 508,000 and the population of Los Angeles is 576,000. San Francisco is therefore the metropolis of California.
49. John was born two years after his younger brother George, who is now ten.
50. All coins made before the birth of Christ bore the imprint B. C. after the date.

NUMBER CORRECT

PERCENTILE SCORE

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIVE SENTENCES

1. Once when I was small I saw a teacher whip a little boy. I then and there decided that capital punishment in the schools should be abolished.
2. The nation of Asia Minor has been suffering such frightful vicissitudes that the American Red Cross has asked for instant assistance in sending supplies.
3. The reason we must watch our oral English is because we habitually make so many mistakes in writing.
4. Slang and extravagant expressions tend to develop our power to use pure English.
5. Oil should be used instead of water in sprinkling our streets, because oil evaporates more quickly than water.
6. Economic living has a great deal to do with the high cost of living because it has made most of us think that we must have more conveniences, more luxuries, more clothes, and more amusements than our fathers had.
7. Increased wages and longer working hours have tended to raise the cost of living.
8. For the general welfare of the country, politics of the city, not the nation, must be kept clean.
9. The wireless apparatus makes sea voyages more dangerous than before.
10. As the machine is ball bearing, it requires more energy to operate.
11. The small profit on which they run their business gives you an excellent opportunity of buying good values at high prices.
12. If the merchant comes to Boston only on the twenty-ninth day of the month he will in 1925 make twelve annual trips.
13. Many people who owned radio sets heard immediately of President Taft's election.
14. After we had walked a block ahead, we walked a block to the left; then turning, a block to the left; and again turning, a block to the right. Thus our course followed a square.
15. John's house is a mile from his grandmother's. He regularly makes two trips there each day. During October, omitting Columbus Day, when he remained at home, he must have walked sixty miles.

16. A noted doctor's niece was among those who failed to pass the recent examination for entrance into West Point.
17. The storm of assent which followed his proposal was so overpowering he was forced to relinquish his plan.
18. As I considered the excuse he offered valid, I refused to pardon him.
19. On such a solemn occasion as this will be, one's dress should be inconspicuous, so be sure to select something very vivid to wear.
20. The third and fourth companies were so irresolute when marching against the enemy, that we had the greatest confidence in their success.
21. The most stirring number in the entire performance was the solo given by the youthful violinist and cellist, each of whom has exceptional talent.
22. Four days of heavy rain had kept the Brown family from not even sharing its usual daily quota of gossip of the village life with the Arnold family across the field.
23. It fell to the lot of the major to rebuke the company for not retreating when he had given the command to advance.
24. If I were in great need of money, and a friend should offer me my choice of *a half-bushel of silver dollars* or *a bushel of silver half-dollars*, I should choose the latter, as the value would be the same.
25. The discipline of our department store is like the discipline in the United States army; every employe must obey his subordinate.
26. The president indicated his approval of the act by vetoing it.
27. I am twice as old as my sister Jane, who is five; when she is seven I shall of course be fourteen.
28. That the orator's address was impromptu was evident from the fact that he spoke from notes to which he constantly referred.
29. Bi-weekly meetings are held here every Wednesday.
30. As the lowest score in golf wins, I have, with my score of *100*, easily defeated John, whose score is *75*.
31. A lunar month contains twenty-eight days; there are therefore twelve lunar months in a year.
32. The old hermit always had his hut filled with guests.

33. As *obverse* is the opposite of *reverse*, we cannot say that the obverse side of a coin is the one which bears the principal image or inscription.
34. Words of two syllables, accented on the last, and ending in a single consonant which is preceded by a single vowel, double the consonant when a suffix is added. According to this rule the past tense of *refer* should be spelled r-e-f-e-r-r-e-d.
35. As the verb *combat* is accented on the first syllable, it does not come under the foregoing rule. The past tense is spelled c-o-m-b-a-t-e-d.
36. My mind is blurred; I cannot even hardly remember the name of our rescuer.
37. The first is the second letter preceding the third one following the fourteenth letter in the alphabet; the second is first letter following the third one preceding the first letter just found.
38. All state laws prevent a man from marrying his widow's sister.
39. As we should learn to be accurate and grammatical in our expression, we should, remembering that a compound subject takes a plural verb, say, *six and seven are fifteen*.
40. Neither Edison, Carnegie, nor Ford attended college. This proves that a college education is of no value to a business man.
41. The enemy suddenly surprises us by an attack which we were just then confidently expecting.
42. One ship goes east, another west,
 By the selfsame winds that blow;
 'Tis the set of the sail, and not the gale
 That determines the way they go.
 Like the winds of the the sea are the ways of fate,
 As we voyage along through life;
 'Tis the set of the soul that decides the goal,
 And not the calm or the strife.
43. This stanza implies that we can not secure the desired goals in life if our souls are set true.
44. If our Federal law prevents all citizens from manufacturing or selling intoxicating liquors in our country it is not obvious that intoxicating liquors are neither manufactured nor sold in the United States.

45. I have no brothers, sisters, and no half-sisters, but Margaret's mother is my mother's daughter.
 46. Having descended into a valley completely surrounded by rugged hills, we watched the sun, like a ball of fire, sink below the edge of the horizon.
 47. My father's words, "If the teacher punishes my son, I shall punish the teacher's pupil," gave me every assurance of security from punishment in school and at home.
 48. When fourteen years old, my father read to me the Declaration of Independence.
 49. The only difference between animals and human beings is that human beings carry over the memory of old experiences for the solving of new situations or problems,—and animals don't.
 50. If all our watches and clocks should cease running, time would stop.
-

EDITORIAL NOTE

A meeting of the National Conference on Uniform Entrance Requirements in English will be held February 21. Members of our Association, who have suggestions to offer, are urged to communicate at once with Professor Henry G. Pearson, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

ATLANTIC NARRATIVES

Second Series

Edited by Charles Swain Thomas
Harvard University

ATLANTIC MONTHLY short stories of unusual literary distinction for reading and study in the Secondary School. This collection is included in the contemporary literature list recommended at the December meeting of the New England Association of Teachers of English.

\$1.00

Mary Antin
Lucy Huffaker
Joseph Husband
Meredith Nicholson
Kathleen Norris
William Ganoe
S. H. Kemper
Laura Porter
Margaret Montague
Lucy Pratt

The ATLANTIC MONTHLY PRESS

8 Arlington St.

Boston

You can learn the craftsmanship of

SHORT-STORY WRITING

An avocation for professional men and women
A profession for younger men and women

JOHN GALLISHAW

offers Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced Courses, which include both individual and class instruction. The classes, limited in enrollment, meet once each week for three months, and the work is interesting and profitable. Publishers demand well-written stories. Mr. Gallishaw helps you meet this demand.

Reservations are now being made for day and evening classes. The Spring Courses begin in March. The six-week Summer Courses begin in July.

Individual Instruction and Manuscript Criticism Service by appointment.

Introductory Course by Mail

Address the Secretary for further information

THE CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL OF CREATIVE WRITING

Harvard Square, Cambridge, Mass.

Tel. Porter 1358-M

MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE
SCHOOL OF ENGLISH
At Bread Loaf Inn in the Green Mountains

June 30—August 14, 1925

Professor Robert M. Gay, President of the New England Association of Teachers of English and author of "Writing through Reading", will be a member of the 1925 staff. The list of special lecturers includes Marguerite Wilkinson, author of "New Voices"; John Farrar, editor of the "Bookman"; Hamlin Garland, author of "A Son of the Middle Border"; and others.

For circulars, address

HELEN W. BLANCHARD, Secretary,
SEVENTEENTH SUMMER SESSION

MIDDLEBURY

VERMONT

**A NEW TEXT BOOK IN
GRAMMAR**

that calls for real work

that makes the pupils get out paper and pencil and study

that makes them think

that brings about a sense of mastery of a problem

that allows each one to progress according to his own
ability

that makes pupils like grammar

STUDIES IN GRAMMAR

By Mabel C. Hermans

of the JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL, LOS ANGELES,
CALIFORNIA

HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

To ground your class in fundamentals—

**TANNERS'
COMPOSITION AND RHETORIC**

A new course strikingly successful because of its common-sense recognition of the needs of average students in composition, spelling, punctuation, grammar, and correct usage.

To pull each pupil's English up to par—

**BALL'S
CONSTRUCTIVE ENGLISH**

Not only a handbook but a classroom text, admirably constructed to give every member of the class just the individual help that he needs.

GINN AND COMPANY

15 Ashburton Place

Boston, Mass.

COLLEGE GRADUATES

Who know the meaning of thoroughness and who take pride in scholarly accuracy are in special demand for literary and editorial work of a high character.

We are prepared to give by correspondence

A Complete Professional Training

to a limited number of suitable candidates who are interested in better English and who wish to fit themselves for a second profession. Those having higher degrees will find the course eminently attractive and advantageous.

For further information address

THE MAWSON EDITORIAL SCHOOL

25 Huntington Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts